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Memorandum

To: ENRP Co-Chairs Sean O'Connor & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Government Affairs Subcommittee Member Wright Ellis

Re: June & July 2003 meetings

Date: July 25, 2003

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Government Affairs Subcommittee met June 6 at the First Niagara Bank Offices and July 7, 2003 at Christino's at the Amherst Marriott. Present for the June meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Ellis, Meal, Weinstein, and Sheffer, as well as ENRP members James Allen and Peter Wendel. Present for the July meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Ellis, Meal, Weinstein, and Sheffer.

Local Governments Forum

The Local Governments Forum, a follow-up to last year's local government collaborative opportunities brochure, took place Wednesday, June 11, 2003 at 7 p.m. in the "G" Building Auditorium at Erie Community College's North Campus.

Topics presented at the meeting were electronic permitting by John Sheffer, the Framework for Regional Growth by Drew Reilly, the Regional Economic Development Strategy / Economic Development Working Group by James Allen, and the Regional Cultural Tourism Initiative by Robert Shibley. We also told those present a bit about ENRP, and asked them to become involved or get more information by filling out a survey that night.

The good news is that the presentations and feedback were quite good. The bad news is that the attendance was not. Therefore, as a follow up to the event, all the information and the survey have been posted on the ENRP website, www.erie.gov/enrp and the two local governments associations are urging their members to check out the site. Future events such as this are worth pursuing.

Electronic Permitting

Subcommittee Member Sheffer gave an update on electronic permitting. The pilot is underway, and is being tested with the pilot communities of the

Town of Lockport, Wales, the Village of Hamburg, Amherst, and the City of Tonawanda. Ciminelli and Ellicott Development have agreed to test the site, and the City of Buffalo is also participating, although they will not be part of the pilot as they could overwhelm it.

As part of Erie County's contract, following the pilot the Institute will offer municipalities throughout Erie County the opportunity to become involved in the system. This presentation will also be given to Niagara County municipalities. Erie County has committed funds for EC municipalities who wish to join; funding responsibility is pending in Niagara County.

The contract with Erie County expires in September, but the issue of timing was brought up as most municipal officials are up for election this year. Sheffer replied that the timeframe for the demonstration portion is flexible.

REDD

The 2003 funding for the Regional Economic Development Database (REDD) is in place, but the subcommittee feels that 2004 needs to be talked about soon. The Erie County administration has indicated that they do not wish to be the major funder of the project anymore, and that as the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise (BNE) is the main user, it should be transitioned to them. BNE, in turn, has indicated that it cannot afford to fund REDD themselves. This brings into question the future home and maintenance for the database, which is a key piece of the economic development delivery system we have been working to put in place.

Some issues are the funding component and breakdown, the long term future of BNE, and whether an organization other than UB can maintain the site as well for as low a cost.

To address these issues, the Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth – REDD's current home – have been requested to convene a stakeholders meeting to discuss the housing and funding of REDD in 2004. This meeting will take place in the very near future.

Other Topics

Other topics discussed included MUUNIX (still on hold until Niagara County's new risk manager is put in place), publicity for our projects, and regional initiatives among area colleges.